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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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THE POWER OF GOD'S TRUTH.

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—Isaiah lv. 10, 11.

In that little strip of land on the eastern end of the Mediterranean sea—to wit, Palestine, which upon the map looks almost like a line, there are combined so many elements that the figures drawn from nature there have a fitness to every clime on the globe. On the north the great ranges of the Libanus and Anti-Libanus, lift up snow-clad peaks all the year round; and in all the northern and more mountainous parts, snow descends in winter freely, and there is a real winter climate.

The southern part of Palestine, some hundred and fifty miles lower down on the edge of the Arabian Sea, and all the way intermediate, there are gradations of climate, according to the hill and valley formation, until you come to the sands of Arabia; and everything that is in fertility and everything that is in barrenness lift up images there.

In turning to the east you have the Sea of Galilee and the *Ghor*, or the valley of the Jordan; and you find that this sea is sunk six hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean, being lined on either side with more or less precipitous hills and mountains. And such you find to be the case, also, with the whole flow of the Jordan to the sea. At this depth the sun pours down its rays with such intensity, and they are so reflected from side to side, that the stones are warmed to such a depth that even in mid-winter vegetation is growing there, and the tenderest plants can be found around Genesareth, and along the course of the Jordan.

So, in this land of Palestine, but little larger than the State of Connecticut, you have the epitome of the world, and of the pro-

ductions of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and a full representation of the seas and lakes and rivers on the earth. So abundant and so varied are the features of this country, that the illustrations which are drawn from it are found to be well understood from one end of the world to the other.

And it is a thing not to be forgotten, that from this land came that Word which has borne down to us the best ideas of moral truth. It is to be kept in mind that that land was the home of the Bible, and that it was the land which gave to the Bible a language that is understood wherever the sun shines—wherever there is summer or winter.

It is from the winter aspect, as well as from the summer aspect, that the illustrations of our text are taken.

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.”

God compares his Word to these elements of summer and winter.

In the first place, what are we to understand by *God's Word*? Not what we mean by *words* in their ordinary acceptance, as so many spoken syllables. Nor are we to understand by the *Word of God*, truth in the limited circle of religious knowledge, but God's truth at large, whether it be truth of natural law, whether it be truth of civic estate, or whether it be truth of ecclesiastical development. Whatever great primary truths belong to the system of this world, and to the moral government of it, may be considered as the truth which is meant in the text. And it is the declaration of the old prophet—the inspired man of old—speaking in the name of the Lord, that truth, comprehensively regarded, is like the snow, and like the rain, and that it shall not fail upon the earth—that it shall do what God commissioned it to do.

Let us, then, look at some points of comparison. They may seem merely ingenious, or novel; but where illustrations are given to us in the Word of God, it is perfectly fair that we should run them out in their minor analogies, if by so doing we can enlarge our conception of the errand of the figures which are contained in the Word of God.

It is not an immaterial consideration, in the beginning, to reflect how the vapors which form rain and snow lie invisible before the eyes of men, far up, hidden in the heights, so that they can see no storms though there are storms right above their heads.

That which the thermometer can see of heat, men cannot see. That which the barometer can tell of pressure, men's senses cannot perceive. That which can be measured by instruments of moisture, man has no fineness of organization adequate to measure. The great agencies which control the senses are agencies which in their subtler form elude the senses, except where they have the help of artificial instruments. We, who are so proud, are not organized after all so finely as to be able, unassisted, to watch these things. And in this great aerial cradle above are rocked what storms! They grow, and have power to shake continents; but we look upon them, and see them not. No man can see them until some breath of cooler air sweeps through them. Then the whole hemisphere is wrapped with one cloud. In an instant, if it be winter, drops turn into crystals, and the air is filled with commotion. At one hour no man can see anything of storm or darkness, and in another hour no man can see any visible object upon the earth by reason of storm and darkness.

So, out of the great unthought-of and invisible realms, come truths unsuspected and undiscerned. And as it is not until the vapors touch these lower spheres and strata that they become condensed and tangible and visible, so it is not until abstract truths which lie hidden and undeveloped are unfolded and rendered concrete that they become usable and visible. It is not until they descend, as it were, and touch the sides of human experience, that we can see them, and apply them to the practical necessities of life.

Consider, also, in looking at the connection of truth with this illustration, how strangely errant, and how singularly feeble are all the advances of storms. If you have ever traversed the upper regions of our land, you have passed through clouds. As we sit in our summer homes in the White Mountains and look upon Mount Washington, we see him crowned and clouded while all is fair below. If you go to the base, and ride toward the summit, the sun shines as you enter the car, and as you begin to ascend; but when you have gone half way up, the mists gather about you, and you are perfectly shrouded in them. Yet there is not in them all any obstruction, except to the vision. You press through them easily. Harmless and powerless are these small particles, these infinitely minute globules, that make vapors or clouds. How entirely harmless and powerless they are! And when by condensation they become rounded drops, and begin to fall through the air, unaccompanied by winds, what is the storm, what are these plashing drops, but so many lullabys of nature, or so many hindrances to pleasure, as the case may be? Rain-drops, as they come down,

one after another, find their way to the ground. None of them seem to march in ranks; none of them seem to be on any errand; they seem merely to be making haste to plunge themselves upon the earth.

Snow is rain rendered more visible, being more highly organized, crystallized; but how strangely vagrant is it! Is there anything that seems to have more leisure, that seems to have more time on its hands, than the snow, as it goes wavering lazily seeking its lower level, the air being filled with flakes so that it seems as if the birds had plucked their feathers, which were flying every whither? If you take one in your hand, it dies while you are looking at it. If it lies on the ground, it lies soft and powerless. Not an infant's hand is so soft and powerless as this snow. And yet it has power to put out the eyes of all the ships on the coast, and to lay its hand upon the whole continent, and hush industry, and shut men up in their homes. No key imprisons them. The soft, plushy substance, coming day and night, blocks up all roads, stops all travel, sends the plow in-doors, and causes the creaking of the carts to cease. The oxen low in their stalls, and business over all the northern continents lies still and buried, waiting for emancipation; and the cause of all this stagnation is the soft, indolent, aimless, passionless snow.

When, however, it has fallen upon the mountain-tops, and collected there in repeated storms, until the mountains themselves have been lifted up, and the weight of the snow begins to be prodigious, then comes another power of the snow. Not the thunder in the heavens now is louder, and not the levin bolt is more fatal than the snow, when, helpless in particles, but wonderfully omnipotent in bulk, it descends as a mass, and crushes all that is before it.

Now, the truth of God has had, and has to-day, very much the same experience as this. It comes to us in little revelations. Discoveries are not sheeted and connected so as to cover whole fields of knowledge. Single facts present themselves, and men observe them, and they lie unfruitful in their hands. For years, for a generation perhaps, they have no effect; but the second or third generation, it may be, couples them together, and draws from them a conclusion. Thus some little progress is made. Thus gradually truth is extracted from the nebosity of the universe. But, after all, how slowly does it come! How disconnected is it! How vague and aimless it seems to be! The very things which to-day are revolutionizing the science of astronomy, those same facts which have led to the construction of instruments of observation

that are telling us much about the stellar universe, have been in the hands of men for a thousand years, helpless, powerless, good for nothing, apparently.

With slow increment did men learn social truths! Let any one read the history of the development of the household during the times of the patriarchs, and he will see that it has made great progress since then. We talk of the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and these phrases resound with all the knowledge which we have gained during four thousand years; but go back to the days in which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob lived, and see how mean the household was, how poor its experience was, and how unrich its social intercourse was. Go back and see what gross idolatry existed in their time, and how men supplemented knowledge, and how they eked out weakness by all the craft and lies and subtler elements which belonged to animalhood. Go back and see how, with slow steps the world has been gaining from hundreds of years to hundreds of years, through various generations. How slowly did the truths of social life develop themselves, and come to be as rich as they are in the Christian households of to-day!

Look at the theory or science of government, and see how slowly it has unfolded, here a fact and there an experiment, here a disaster, and there a success, evolving the fragmentary local truths of certain periods, so that not until after thousands and thousands of years had gradually accumulated them, could there be condensed any such theory of political economy, any such system of government, as we have now. And as rain-drops come, one by one, and mingle at last in storms, and produce rivers, and then flow down to the sea, and become mighty there; so the knowledges that are as deep as the sea, and that are as swift as rivers, running towards the sea, have come as rain-drops, little by little, accumulating through generations and ages of the world.

The mechanical power of the rain and the snow, of which we have thus far been speaking, are, however, far from being their most remarkable feature; and it is not the mechanical power which the prophet employed most emphatically as the marrow of his illustration. When the rain descends, it disappears. The earth sucks it up. It is gone. Only then, however, does it begin to do its work. The cleansing of the leaves is better than nothing, when the summer's drought has brought the summer's dust upon them; but after all, it is only when the earth has taken the rain as a chemist, and has dissolved the silex, and the various mineral elements of the soil; it is only when, having dissolved these, it has carried them as

food to a thousand little rootlets ; it is only when they have received them by that soundless power which is mightier in any field than the mightiest engine in any factory ; it is only when the roots and the trunk and the branches begin to draw up the moisture from the earth by their mighty pumping—it is only then that the rain comes to its true function.

God's truths, that fall upon the world, even while they are speculative, have a value and an interest ; but their true power does not lie in that direction. It lies not in the creed, but in that life which grows out of it ; not in any doctrinal statements, but in those experiences which are in themselves interpretations of abstract doctrinal statements. It is only in that which men have thought out, and begun unconsciously to *live out*, that the truth has its real majesty.

When truth re-appears in organization, we know it not. More than ninety per cent. of living organizations are water. If you were to take a tree and dry it to absolute dryness, I had almost said that you could carry an acre-covering oak in your hand. If you were to take the human body and dessicate it so that it was absolutely dry—supposing such a thing to be possible—one could carry himself in a thimble. The size, the weight, the vigor, is largely the swelling out of the moisture that is in the vegetable and the animal tissue. So when the rains have descended, they reappear not as clouds, not as rivers, not as the sea, but in potential forms, such as forests and harvests, covering the earth. No man points to the wheat, and says, "That is rain ;" and yet it is rain. It is the effect of rain. It is the product of rain. Nobody points to the cedars of Lebanon, or to the mighty pines and firs of the West, and says, "There is where our last summer's storms went ;" and yet there *is* where they went. They are living, organized, and hidden in other forms.

God's truths come down upon the world, first as truths which men speculatively understand, or which they sympathetically feel ; and by and by they enter into men's thought, into their will, into their economy, and become a part of manners, of customs, of laws and of institutions. Truth organizes itself into visible forms, and men seem to think that it is no longer truth. They go, therefore, to the Bible to find truth, as if it existed there in its most pure and perfect form. No, it does not.

Rain is most potential, not when it is yet rain, but when it is in the lion's paw ; when it is in the foot of the deer ; when it is in the horn of the unicorn ; when it is in the hand and brain of man ; when it has been organized, and exists in some invisible latent

form, giving to life its potency. Not printed truth is the most potential form of truth.

Go where the widow, in poverty, bears the burden and responsibility of a large family, supported by a living faith in God. There is the truth more than in creed or inspired revelation. When it has disappeared as truth and reappeared as life, then it is the truth of God as rain and snow, which, coming down in visible forms, lose their life, find it again, and are more mighty than ever. Thus it is that God's truth works, not by invisible forms alone, but by organizations.

Without pursuing these analogies and parallelisms further, let us consider a little at large the great truth that was meant to be set forth by this illustration.

I remark, first, that there is no evidence that any single truth or any single important invention has ever been lost out of the world.

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The errand of truth is a successful errand, and has been from the beginning. I believe that nothing that ever was thought rightly, wisely, and with benefit in it, has been, if I may so say, unthought. I believe that nothing which has been brought up into the realm of knowledge has ever been so lost out that the world is defrauded thereby. As there cannot be anything lost chemically, as there can only be change from one form into another, so I apprehend that there has been nothing of truth lost. There have been enormous changes in systems of theology, but they have been changes from one form to another. I believe that nothing which was true, and carried benefit in it, has been lost. There is no evidence whatever that the world has lost out a physical truth, a social truth, a civic truth, an economical truth, a moral truth, or a spiritual truth. There is no evidence that any truth has ever returned void. In so far as truths have been developed they have mingled themselves with the life of the world, and they are going on to this day still beating in the veins of men, still managing human affairs, still reporting themselves the servants of God, and still accomplishing the errands on which he sent them.

There are men who marvel at the past, and suspect that there have been profound secrets buried. Yes, some—such as were not worth keeping; such as the world could well spare; many secrets of cruelty; many secrets of oppression; many secrets of animal life—its frauds, its deceits, its rude violence, its vulgarity, and its bestiality. Let us hope that some things have been forgotten, and

have died out of the world. But where is there a thing that ever made the household brighter, or men more manly, which has been forgotten? Where is there any trace which shows that human power has diminished? The scope of thought was never so broad, the sphere of action was never so large, and the potency of human faculty was never so great, as it is to-day.

Nor is there any intimation anywhere that a single one of the instruments by which, in the olden time, men accomplished anything by the truth has been lost out of the hand of the modern artificer. To be sure, there have been stones cut in the old times larger than those which have been cut in modern times; but there have never been any cut larger than can be cut now. We could build enormous palaces, and we could scatter over the plain masses of stone, like those of Baalbec. There is no trouble in equalling every achievement of the olden time. Give us those conditions which made men worth no more than the rabbits of the field or the angle-worms of the soil; make me supreme where there are five million men; let me be absolute monarch under circumstances where it makes no difference if five hundred thousand men are killed outright in tugging with concentrated strength at vast weights; give me leave to control all their industries, and gather the wealth of a kingdom, and lavish it upon one sumptuous palace, one vast temple, and the old mutilated lions and broken sphinxes which stand in the desert waste shall, as to-day, lift up their heads and bear witness to the squandering of power and the cruelty of despotism. Thank God, men are worth so much that nobody can hustle them afield now to build such piles. We have the skill to do it; we have a better knowledge to enable us to do it; but instead of building pyramids like these, we build men's cottages.

That which made the pomp and splendor of Palmyra, Tadmor, and other vast oriental cities, the pride and shame of such miserable despots as Solomon, and Joseph his predecessor, who, under the political economy of their times, bought the Egyptian people, and made them their property—their sole possession—that pomp and splendor, thank God, is gone. It went down with the early primitive condition of the world. Now we make farms. Now we build men. Now we bring up the masses. Now we educate nations. It is not very much to make caste and class and aristocracy, or even a crowned hero. Nobler is it to take a race and make them heroic. That is what we are laboring for. And all this back-looking for instruments which are lost, is folly. Nothing is lost that we need mourn for or regret to lose. The world

has shaken off nothing that it could afford to keep. It might shake off a great deal more and be the better for it.

When you next go to the country, skirt some forest where the white-oak grows, and notice the leaves which are upon it. The white-oak is a regular old conservative. He has held on to his last summer's leaves and feebly flaunts them in the wind, as though they had juice in them—which they have not. What are leaves in winter worth? They have done their work; their function is over; and the first hour in which the spring sends young blood through the tree, and the buds begin to swell and grow, they will crowd off every one of those old leaves.

So in the world's history, things that are useful soon spend themselves, and old manners and customs and laws are shed to make way for new ones. Higher than progression is the truest conservation; and obstinate conservation is the stupidest of all backward-looking toward Egypt.

The fear which men have that religious truth will shrink and perish in the mutations of affairs is groundless. When we remember that truth is the instrument of God, the thought of the Almighty; when we consider that by it he governs men, as by physical elements he controls matter and the whole universe, then to be afraid of the progress of truth, and to be afraid that it will discontinue in the world, is to be afraid of God's fidelity. It is to doubt the Throne of the Eternal.

It is true that there are rolling on, in the progress of the great work of civilization, those revolutions which bring day and night. Every night awaits the morning. There is no night that does not find its way into the light again. And in every obscuration of truth, here and there, in this or in that community, from special causes, the darkness is but temporary. The light is just beyond, and shall surely dawn again.

Good men are thrown into a shiver every once, in a while, and there is often much perturbation, as science advances, and makes known new truths, and brings them to bear as criticisms on old theological truths; but let those doubt and fear who believe nothing in God. I believe in God, and neither doubt nor fear. For God's truth shall not return unto him void. It shall accomplish that for which he sent it. It shall live. It is not in the power of darkness, nor in the power of the Prince of Darkness, nor in the power of men, to make nights long enough to put out the truth of God. It may come down in fragments; it may seem to come down ill-timed, as storms often do which disappoint men's expectations; it may come down like the rain or snow which comes in ways that

disagree with men's prejudices and organizations and beliefs; but it is a part of that procession of the universe which God projected and supervises; and it shall accomplish its purpose.

I, for one, rise higher than speculation, higher than argument, higher than conviction; I rise higher than that knowledge which enables me to say: "I know that it is true, and that therefore it must stand." I rise as high as the throne of God, and say: "Since all truth sprang from thee, all truth has in it something of thine irresistibleness;" and though it has its stages, its time of quietude, and its time to exert its power, it shall have God's omnipotence in the end. So I am not distressed nor alarmed.

And as to the moving of foundations, as to the damage which is done right and left, I have learned not to expect any good without labor-pains. Children do not come into the world as birds in spring come hopping from the branches through the window, all plumed and singing. They enter life with groans and travail and in very great helplessness. And no great truth is born, nor born again, into any custom or law, without going through travail and labor-pains.

Men say: "Do you not unsettle things when you give countenance to theories of science?" No. When you give countenance to wild theories of any kind, of course you yourself are foolish; but when the world stands awaiting the revelation of God, sometimes through holy men, and sometimes through the physical globe, at one time through one experience, and at another time through another, there is no reason to fear that the truth will be lost in going through these various channels. For we are assured that it will have free course to run and be glorified. We are assured that as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so the Word of God shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish the thing which he doth please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it. Where one believes in that, he is prepared to meet those incidental evils which stand connected with the progress of truth. He is in a condition such that, when going through transition periods, if he is unshipped from one belief, he does not give up all others.

What are called "carries" are known in the West. Sometimes men take their boat from one stream and bear it on their shoulders to another, and launch it. It is a most wearisome task, and one not very agreeable; nevertheless, he that has reached head-waters going up one stream is glad to get a descent down another, even

though it involve the trouble of a "carry." He is willing to take all the pains required to find a better passage-way for his keel.

I suppose no farmer ever broke up an old pasture, that he did not unsettle a population of millions of grubs, black-backed beetles, and mice, together with the stores which they had laid up, and of which he knows nothing. And I have no doubt that if you were to take statistics of their opinion, you would not find one of them that, being overturned in the furrow, did not think that the disturbance of the soil had produced confusion worse confounded, wreck and ruin. Yet out of this plowing, sub-soiling, scarifying and harrowing, come the new grass, a better harvest, and a brighter future. It is worth while to plow under the old once in a while, in order to get the new. Old truths turned over and beginning to decay, are, after all, working more valiantly in their invisible states, than when they were visible, and are doing more for faith in God, and for the truth that God nourishes in his almighty bosom.

It is not you that preserves the truth, any more than it is the pickax that discovers gold, when it is used in the hand of the miner to dig gold out of the earth.

What if a dozen pickaxes, being stood together aside in the corner, after the day's work, should begin to talk among themselves, and say one to another: "We are getting so dull, and so used up, that I think we shall not be able to support these miners much longer?" Suppose they should dream, because they were employed to pick in the mountain by the hand of intelligence and strength, that therefore on them the whole success of the miners depended! And yet, men, who are God's pickaxes, are afraid that the gold, and silver, and iron, and copper of truth will be lost in this world. But God is the Miner. It is his thought and hand that use you. Not that the pickax is not a very good thing, and quite necessary for human industry; but after all, it is an instrument, and is subordinate to the might and power that are behind and above it.

God employs men as molds in which to cast his truths. Palpitating hearts are implements in his hands. He sounds out from men's affections, from their understandings, from their wills, the things which he wants the world to know. He reveals himself through them.

But, after all, it is God that is the father-truth. Men are to him only what the harp is to the hand of the harper—a dead thing, giving forth music simply as it is played upon by the skill of him who puts his hand upon it. All the world is God's harp. Out of

human experiences he is evolving those notes which by-and-by are to constitute the grand symphony of the universe. It is God that thinks, that wills, and that by a thousand ways draws men into sympathy with him in thinking and willing; and he is working out through the race, past, present and to come, those great problems of the future which we now discern only in their very germinal leaves, but which are yet to stand as trees of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

It is not to diminish your sense of the value of the truth that I speak thus: it is to augment your sense of the power of God, and strengthen your confidence that the truth will endure on the earth in spite of all changes, and do its mighty works, because it is from God, and will not return to him void, but will accomplish the purposes for which he sent it.

It may dampen our pride, perhaps, to reflect, in this matter, that while God has employed men to sustain the truth, the truth owes little to them, as compared with what they owe to it.

If General Grant thinks he saved the country by conducting the war to its termination, he is at liberty to think so, and in some sense it is true; but let me say to him that the war made him before he finished the war. It was the earlier conditions, it was the elementary strifes, it was the exigencies of the nation, that molded him, and shaped him into potency, and gave him those qualities by which he was enabled to help his country.

Does a philosopher think that he is the father of philosophy? He is the child of it. It made him, instead of his making it.

I hear men say that the Church has preserved God's truth in the world. There is a superficial sense in which this is so; but the true rendering is: "God's truth has preserved the Church."

Why, have you saved the sun by your candle? Is it your optical glass that has been the cause of the preservation of light? And is man's thinking about the truth the reason why that truth remains? If every man on earth were dead to-day, and not a cricket's chirp broke the silence of the universal globe, truth would stand undiminished, unchanged. And if there came up from our graves another distinct race of men, and they were led through a wilderness of ten thousand years, to the truth of God, they would come to those truths just as we have. Wherever we have made a foot-print, they would make another just like it, in discovering the truth. We do not keep God alive: he keeps us alive. We do not preserve the truth: the truth preserves us. The oil by which it burns is from on high, and not from below. And while it has pleased God to allow us, by experiments and discoveries, to learn

glorious truths, within and without, after all, it is God that works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Let us, then, take joy in the thought that the truth will stand, whatever may be the alternations of opinion; whether themes which are dear to us go up or down; whether liberty seems to recede, and despotism seems to throw a broader and broader shadow on the earth; or whether free government seems to emerge and hang on the horizon like a star of promise; whether men's opinions of religious truth seem sinking into a slough of sensuous indulgence, or whether they seem to have resurrection, and to be rising on every side with fresh power. And whatever may be the external appearance of the great realm of God's truth, remember that the marrow of truth, the soul of truth, the life of truth, is not with you, but with God who sustains it, and sustains you to discern it, and to rejoice in it. The heavens may perish, but not one particle, not one jot nor one title, of God's truth shall ever fail. The Word of the Lord standeth sure, and the truth of God is immutable.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE have no need to draw near to thee to arouse thy thought, our Father. We have no need to draw near to thee to make known our case, that thou mayest understand us. We have no need to persuade thy willingness; for thou dost never forget, and thou art always beforehand with thy desires, laying the path in which our desires move. At every step we find the tokens of thy presence. Wherever we go, we find that thou hast been there before us. Nor can we escape from thy sight. The morning and the evening bounds are filled with thy presence. The highest heaven and the lowest depth still find thee. Whither can we flee from thee? Everywhere we are surrounded by thee. Everywhere thy thoughts are thoughts of mercy. Everywhere throughout all thy laws, and throughout all the periods of time, thou art moving the race upward. Thou art ever developing in men a higher excellence, and in generations nobler and nobler ambitions. And we believe that yet this Earth which now groans and travails in pain, shall touch the blessedness of the new Heaven and the new Earth in which are to dwell righteousness.

We rejoice that we may come to thee, therefore, sure that thou art willing to receive us, and that thou dost but seemingly withhold anything that we need. We rejoice to believe that when we are deprived of things which we desire, it is only that our hearts may be fitted to play upon thine. We rejoice that it is only that thy heart may reach forth in our consciousness to stir us up, that thou hast conditioned thy mercy upon our supplications. Thou longest for us, and thou art teaching us to long for thee. That hard lesson which we learn so slowly, to live as seeing Him who is invisible; and that

harder lesson, more slowly learned, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength—these things thou art teaching us. And we rejoice that thou dost teach us by pain as well as by joy; by sorrow in overmeasure, as it would sometimes seem to us, but as it never seems to thee. We rejoice that thou dost, by prosperity and by adversity, in youth, in mid-life, and in old age, still pursue thy purpose of mercy. Nor shall death consummate it. We shall still go on under thy guiding hand, rising through unknown heights, through strange developments, through mighty attainments, which it is not lawful, even if we could conceive of them, to utter. We rejoice in believing that we shall hold on as long as thou dost in thine own eternity, as sons of God, and as heirs inheriting all that thou hast, and coming into possession thereof, more and more, perpetually, as our powers increase and our capacity enlarges. We look forward to the future with joy, and desire evermore to live with our eye upon the world which is to come, and to cast upon this life the glories of the life beyond, so that the paths which are obscure may be irradiated; so that the burdens which seem heavy may be light; so that our experience may be interpreted to us by faith.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt, this day, fill every one in thy presence with thy goodness, and accept the thanksgiving which many hearts offer to thee, for sparing mercies, and for thy great kindness to them.

We pray that thou wilt listen to all those who, this morning, fulfill their vows, and give thanks in thy sanctuary for promises kept. We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt draw near to all those who are under a shadow. May it seem to them, at last, that it is the shadow of thy wings. May they feel joy even in darkness, and sing songs in the night.

We pray that thou wilt be with those who are watchers, and who discern evil to come, which in their imagination takes on all fantastic forms. Grant, we pray thee, that there may be heard upon the stormy sea, and in the presence of the specter that seems to draw near, the voice of sweetness and of love, saying to them, Be not afraid; it is I. And may every providence that comes to us, whether it come with smiles or with threats, disclose itself as the will of God; and so may we ever seem to be with the Lord.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt grant unto us more and more patience, and more and more willingness to endure whatever thou art pleased to inflict upon us.

May we be more and more willing to abound or to suffer lack; to go up or to go down. As good soldiers, may we be willing to bear hardness in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that our faith may not fail, and that wherever thou hast placed us, severally, whether it be in obscurity or in publicity; whether it be in circumstances of ease or in circumstances of overmuch care; whether it be in a condition of wealth or a condition of poverty in any direction; however we may be situated in this world, we may have the guiding hand and the consoling Spirit of our God with us.

Wilt thou comfort such as in bereavement mourn the loss of those who were dear to them. Draw near to any that stand in solitariness, having been separated from their companions. Be with those who are strangers in our midst, and whose quick-flying memory goes far back in search of dear ones left behind.

Be with all those for whom we should pray—the poor, the outcast, the vicious, the criminal. And we beseech of thee that those who have abused their privileges in this life may be led to temperance and hearty reformation. May they return to thee now, even in the last and poorest days of their lives.

Grant thy blessing to rest not only upon this congregation, but upon all the schools which are connected with it. Bless all those who go forth to

make known the truth of Christ Jesus, and to carry instruction and knowledge and sympathy to those who are necessitous in life, and are less favored than we are. We pray that thou wilt grant that there may be awakenings and conversions in all our schools. And we pray that this church may perpetually receive from them bountiful harvests of souls saved.

We pray for all thy churches; for all thy ministering servants; for the cause of God everywhere, as it is embodied in our laws and institutions.

Bless all schools, all academies, institutions of learning of every kind. Multiply the number of them where they are needed, and build them up in efficiency where they are already established. Let those who are most ignorant have the most abundant means of instruction. Thus may thy cause be advanced in this land, and may this great people learn righteousness.

We pray for all the nations of the earth, who are the subjects of multitudes of thy gracious promises. Command that these clouds of promises shall drop down their fulfillment. We beseech of thee that the wilderness may bud and blossom as the rose, and that the whole earth may at last see thy salvation.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we pray that thou wilt grant salvation to every one who is in doubt and fear and anxiety. Thou that didst open the passage through the sea; thou that didst carry thy people through the wilderness; thou that didst smite the Jordan to lead them over; thou that didst take care of them in their mountain land, canst thou not still take care of thy people? Is thine arm shortened? Is thine ear heavy? Thou art the same Jehovah as of old, Lord over all, blessed forever, and forever blessing. We rejoice in thee. We rejoice in thine immutableness. For thou art without variableness or shadow of turning. We put our trust in thy government. Though men seem to perish, none perish. Though causes of good seem to go under, they are planted and not buried. Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may have this super-eminent confidence, and that we may walk by faith and not by sight. Accept our thanks for all the bounties of the day in which we live. We thank thee that our life was cast in these times, and in a sphere of activity where so much has been permitted to us—so much to rejoice in and to hope for. And now we beseech of thee to make thy cause victorious, until the heaven and the earth are renewed and united, and God shall dwell forever among his people. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

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